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*Youthful in Spirit and Manner—*

# *Housemothers Enjoy Personal Ties*

*by Janet Sutherland*

**W**HETHER she's in a sorority, fraternity or dormitory, a housemother typifies the qualities that make Iowa State something special to its students and faculty.

As youthful in spirit as their numerous charges, these proxy mothers have to keep their personal ties keyed to the changing house life. Most are extraordinarily enthusiastic about their work. One woman who came to Iowa State last September expressed her good-nature by emphatically stating that there are definitely no disadvantages in being a housemother at a men's house. Informality, noise, bridge playing - almost synonymous with the word fraternity - don't bother her.

Disagreeing on this point is the director of one freshman dormitory, who declares that she likes regular hours too well to work in a fraternity house. She feels that rest is easier to get in a women's dormitory. Added responsibility of budgeting, planning meals and hiring help, which is required of sorority house directors, is another reason she prefers a freshman dormitory. However, adding that any housemother's job is never one of just checking women in and out, she stressed the importance of counseling and advisory help.

Some housemothers have had special Housemothers' Training at a 4-week summer course at

Purdue University. Similar instruction is being offered on the West Coast. House management, meal planning, budgeting and counseling are general courses taken in the 4-weeks courses. One housemother recalls the instructor's words at the close of the training. "Get used to regular, irregular hours."

## *Rooms and Manners*

One of the sorority housemothers prefers her type of work because she feels she is more on her own in a house off the campus proper. Though she is considered part of the college staff, as all housemothers are, living without definite hours on duty makes her feel more at home. In regard to taking charge of her house, she says, "I always try to let the women manage their own rooms and manners. Meetings are held each quarter in which suggestions on dining room and exchange manners are brought up by the president, student house managers and myself." Duties such as hiring eight waiters, two cooks and a maid, and keeping them happy, consume her time besides budgeting meals and meeting her social obligations.

One senior dormitory director, who has been at Iowa State since 1939, prefers her position because she is dealing with women who have definite objectives at college instead of freshmen, who naturally have to become adjusted to the new life. She has noted much more seriousness among her women, including an increase in 5 and 10-pound parties as the year progresses.

## *Different Personalities*

Consolidating these different personalities and types of work are two interesting innovations of this campus in the housemothers' world. Weekly meetings of all residence directors in the fall, and monthly gatherings through winter and spring quarters are included in their program. Besides drawing the women closer together as a group, the meetings feature speakers from each curriculum at Iowa State. President Charles E. Friley opens each year's meeting. Twice each year Dr. C. H. Matterson of the Department of History and Government speaks, and is considered the group's historian by summarizing the preceding 6 months' news events. In February Mrs. L. W. Corbett, national president of Sigma Kappa, spoke on her sorority from a nation-wide viewpoint. Information about athletics and downtown Ames add variety to the meetings.

As staff members, housemothers may take advantage of the faculty book club at the library and Memorial Union privileges. This fosters better feeling between the college and organized houses, making Iowa State one of the best examples of successful coordination between students and their housemothers.



*Mother Jones, housemother of Beta Theta Pi fraternity, enjoys the singing of the men in those few minutes of relaxation after dinner. Regular-irregular hours do not bother her, and she is always ready to meet new problems.*